

Selected Coaching Research

School-Based Coaching

Alexander Russo in Harvard Education Letter, Research Online, July-August 2004

www.edletter.org/past/issues/2004-ja/coaching.shtml

“One of the most compelling rationales for school-based coaching is that many of the more conventional forms of professional development-such as conferences, lectures, and mass teacher-institute days-are unpopular with educators because they are often led by outside experts who tell teachers what to do, then are never heard from again. To be effective, scores of researchers say, professional development must be ongoing, deeply embedded in teachers' classroom work with children, specific to grade levels or academic content, and focused on research-based approaches. It also must help to open classroom doors and create more collaboration and sense of community among teachers in a school.”

“...there are a number of cultural challenges created by coaching. In many situations, the coach's role in a school is almost entirely new and different-he or she is neither administrator nor district overseer nor classroom peer. Schools and school systems are simply not used to these positions. Perhaps more important, teachers are not usually accustomed to talking about their work in the way one does when working with a coach.

Schools and districts need to make an institutional commitment to coaching in order for it to have any hope of succeeding...We initially started out [only] having coaches work with teacher volunteers, and we wasted a lot of time. If the school's leadership doesn't support [coaches] and the staff doesn't see them being supported, then the coaches are wasted. - Ellen Guiney, director of the Boston Plan for Excellence.

Personal Trainer or Team Coach?

Kate Cress, *Journal of Staff Development*, National Staff Development Council, Vol. 25, No 4, Fall 2004

<http://www.nsd.org/library/publications/jsd/index.cfm>

“In six urban districts studied, the goal for teacher leader work was ambitious. These teacher leaders...were expected to bring about change on scale. Despite this broad mandate, we saw teacher leaders spend nearly half their time as personal trainers. Naturally, they could not bring about reform on scale only by helping teachers one by one. This was not because they lacked skill or commitment, but because the model (personal trainer) did not fit the goal (large-scale change dependent on the work of teacher leaders.) Although the personal trainer model is more prevalent, the need to reach and impact large numbers of teachers suggests a need for trainer as coach model. Working one-on-one with individual teachers helps those individual teachers, but does little to reach the large number of teachers in bigger districts.”

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Fairfax County Public Schools Instructional Coaching

Making Our Own Road: The Emergence of School-Based Staff Developers in America's Public Schools

The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, Alan Richard, May 2003

http://www.emcf.org/programs/student/student_pub.htm

“In districts that are installing large numbers of school-based staff developers (or coaches) the priorities set by superintendents, deputy superintendents, or school boards do not always trickle down to every school in the ways district-level leaders might imagine...Whether they realize it or not, when school systems introduce school-based staff developers into schools, they are changing school cultures in a significant way—and schools, like all cultures, tend to resist change.”

The Coach in the Classroom

Northwest Education, Summer 2005

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

<http://www.nwrel.org/nwedu/10-04/coach/>

Besides being able to work well with adults—teachers, principals, other coaches—instructional coaches must demonstrate a deep knowledge of their content area. They must be curriculum experts. They must be willing to learn, a trait best demonstrated by having lots of professional development on their resumes, and they must be able to model a wide range of good teaching practices in the classroom...

One thing that coaches do *not* do is evaluate other teachers. Nor do they provide information to be used in evaluations, serve as substitute teachers, or fill in for the principal. Instructional coaches are not mentors. Mentors focus on support for new teachers; coaches work with all staff members, creating a safe environment in which to ask for assistance.”

“Like all professional educators, school-based staff developers need ongoing professional development to sharpen their skills and increase their effectiveness. In-school coaches most often cite the need for training in adult learning theory and strategies to help low-achieving students succeed. While some coaches receive a modicum of training on the front-end, they are less likely to see the schools or districts invest in their continuing development.”

Instructional Coaching: Professional Development Strategies That Improve Instruction

Annenberg Institute for School Reform, 2004

Available at www.annenberginstitute.org

“Teachers are typically the ‘the learners,’ but learning must occur at all levels. Instructional coaching is often focused—understandable so—at the school level and considered an issue between school administrators and school staffs. However, insufficient support or commitment not only from

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the school-level leadership, but also from district leadership, can derail even the best-laid plans. It is important to engage not only the school-level personnel who do the work, but also central office personnel to support and align the work across the district...”

“The impact of coaching often goes beyond improving content instruction. The conditions, behaviors, and practices required by an effective coaching program can affect the culture of a school or a system...”

“An essential feature of coaching is that it uses the relationships between coaches, principals, and teachers to create the conversation that leads to behavioral, pedagogical, and content knowledge change.”

“We have found the greatest coherence where coaching is guided by district wide goals and standards that are grounded in research and experience, thereby avoiding disparate approaches as the school level and ineffective, diluted supports from central office.”

Others:

Barkley, S. (2005). *Quality Teaching in a Culture of Coaching*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Education.

Greene, T. (2004). *Literature Review for School-Based Staff Developers and Coaches*. Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council. Available at www.nsdc.org/library/schoolbasedlitreview.pdf

Joyce, B. & Showers, B. (1995). *Student Achievement Through Staff Development: Fundamentals of School Renewal*. White Plains, NY: Longman.

Killion, J. & Harrison, C. (2006). *Taking the Lead: New Roles for Teachers and School-based Coaches*. Oxford, Ohio: The National Staff Development Council.

Knight, J. (2005). “A Primer on Instructional Coaches” *Principal Leadership*, May 2005.

Neufeld, B. & Roper, (2003). *Coaching: A Strategy for Developing Instructional Capacity, Promises, and Practicalities*. Washington, D.C.: Aspen Institute Program on Education and Providence, RI: Annenberg Institute for School Reform, 2003. Available at www.annenberginstitute.org

Poglinco, K et. al (2003). *The Heart of the Matter: The Coaching Model in America's Choice Schools*. Philadelphia: Consortium for Policy Research in Education, University of Pennsylvania. Available at: www.cpre.org/Publications/Publications_Research.htm

Video:

Instructional Coaching: School-Based Staff Development for Improved Teacher and Student Learning. Sandy, UT: The School Improvement/Video Journal, 2005.

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